



# Tennessee News Release

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In Cooperation with Tennessee Department of Agriculture

## 2012 DROUGHT SEVERELY REDUCES CORN CROP

**NASHVILLE, August 10, 2012** – The 2012 crop year began on a very promising note for Tennessee farmers in the early spring then took a turn for the worse as a drought persisted into the summer months. Except for corn, most of the crops have started to recover after finally receiving rainfall in mid-to-late July. As the 2012 harvest begins, corn, cotton, and soybean producers are expecting less than desirable yields. State Director, Debra Kenerson notes, “Earlier this summer the outlook for crops was bleak, but July rainfall brought Tennessee farmers some drought relief saving some of the crops; unfortunately, it came too late for corn.” In brief, an August 1 survey of farmers conducted by the Tennessee Field Office of USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service showed the following: **Corn**, 82 bushels per acre, down 49 bushels from last year’s yield of 131 bushels; **Cotton**, 755 pounds per acre, down 41 pounds from last year; **Soybeans**, 26.0 bushels per acre, down 6 bushels per acre from 2011; **Burley Tobacco**, 1,900 pounds per acre, up by 290 pounds per acre from last year; and **Hay, excluding alfalfa**, 1.9 tons per acre, down 10 percent from 2011.

## LOWEST STATE AVERAGE CORN YIELD IN OVER 20 YEARS EXPECTED

Tennessee’s corn production is forecast at 71.3 million bushels, down 26 percent from a year ago. Yields are expected to average 82 bushels per acre, down significantly from 131 bushels per acre in 2011, and 42 bushels less than the 5-year average. Farmers plan to harvest 870,000 acres for grain, 135,000 more acres than last year and the most in 50 years. Greeted by early warm spring weather, corn planting was complete by mid-May with the crop developing at a rapid pace. Then record hot temperatures during June and early July coupled with a lack of rainfall combined to hammer the crop during the crucial pollination period. As of early August, slightly more than 70 percent of the state’s corn crop has reached the dent stage with over 10 percent of the crop having reached maturity. Corn harvest is underway on a limited basis.

## COTTON PRODUCTION TO PLUMMET

Tennessee’s cotton production is projected to be 590,000 bales, down 27 percent from last year’s production of 813,000 bales. Cotton yields are forecast to average 755 pounds per acre, down 41 pounds per acre from the previous year. Producers expect to harvest 375,000 acres, down 115,000 acres from 2011. Tennessee’s cotton looks good overall and has progressed in development near the five-year average pace. It received the heat units it needed and is now starting to bloom out the top. Adequate July rainfall took the scare out of producers that thought the cotton might go the way of the disastrous corn crop. Some insect pressure from bollworms, plant bugs, and stink bugs has been noted. Producers have been scouting and spraying accordingly. Early August reports indicate, over 80 percent of the cotton acreage is setting bolls and boll set is good.

## SOYBEAN PRODUCTION PREDICTED DOWN SHARPLY

Soybean production is anticipated to be 33.5 million bushels, down 16 percent from last year. Soybean yields are projected at 26.0 bushels per acre, a decrease of 6 bushels per acre from 2011. Acreage for harvest is estimated at 1.29 million acres, up 40,000 from a year ago. The majority of Tennessee growers finished planting by the end of June even though full season bean planting was delayed by hot, dry weather. Temperatures during July were record setting, but beneficial rainfall arrived in mid-July and has improved soybean conditions. The soybean crop is progressing at a pace about a week ahead of the normal rate of development. The crop is blooming and nearly three-quarters of it is setting pods according to early August reports. Approximately, 75 percent of the soybean crop is rated in fair-to-good condition.

(OVER)

## APPLE PRODUCTION TO DECLINE

Tennessee apple growers are expected to produce an estimated 7.5 million pounds of apples, down from last year's production of 8.5 million pounds. Dry weather this summer has had a negative impact on production, but overall the yield is still expected to be greater than the five-year average.

## BURLEY PRODUCTION TO REBOUND IN 2012

Burley production is predicted to reach 28.5 million pounds, up 26 percent from 2011. The average state yield is forecast at 1,900 pounds per acre, up 290 pounds per acre from last year's poor yielding crop. Acreage for harvest is estimated at 15,000 acres, an increase of 1,000 acres from 2011. Most burley growers expect a much improved crop in 2012 compared to the past few years. The early set crop this year was damaged by dry weather, but that set later received timely, ideal July rains just before topping. The burley tobacco crop is maturing a week ahead of the normal pace. Tobacco is being topped with some early harvest in progress. Tennessee's dark-fired tobacco yields are forecast at 2,800 pounds per acre, down 90 pounds from last year, while dark air-cured is forecast to yield 2,600 pounds per acre, down 20 pounds from 2011.

## HAY PRODUCTION WITHERS

Hay production, excluding alfalfa, is projected to total 3.4 million tons, down 13 percent from a year ago. Yields are expected to average 1.9 tons per acre, down 0.2 tons per acre from last year. Acreage is estimated at 1.79 million acres, down 4 percent. Pastures and hay fields suffered from the combination of unusually warm temperatures and drought conditions. Fescue suffered the most, leaving some fields needing to be re-seeded in the fall. Good rainfall and lower temperatures returned in mid-July allowing many hay fields and pastures to recover with some second cuttings of warm season grasses. Pastures are rated in mostly poor-to-fair condition.

### CROP FORECASTS: TENNESSEE AND UNITED STATES, AUGUST 1, 2012, WITH COMPARISONS

Crop	Units	Harvested Acres		Yield Per Acre		Production	
		2011	Indicated 2012	2011	Indicated 2012	2011	Indicated 2012
		Thousands		Number of Units		Thousands	
<b>TENNESSEE</b>							
Apples	lb.	---	---	---	---	8,500	7,500
Corn for grain	bu.	735	870	131.0	82.0	96,285	71,340
Cotton <sup>1</sup>	lb.	490	375	796	755	813	590
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	ton	1,860	1,790	2.10	1.90	3,906	3,401
Soybeans	bu.	1,250	1,290	32.0	26.0	40,000	33,540
Tobacco, All	lb.	22.0	22.1	2,062	2,179	45,363	48,160
Dark fire-cured	lb.	6.9	6.0	2,890	2,800	19,941	16,800
Burley	lb.	14.0	15.0	1,610	1,900	22,540	28,500
Dark air-cured	lb.	1.1	1.1	2,620	2,600	2,882	2,860
Winter Wheat	bu.	310	350	69.0	66.0	21,390	23,100
<b>UNITED STATES</b>							
Apples	lb.	---	---	---	---	9,420,000	8,065,700
Corn for grain	bu.	83,981	87,361	147.2	123.4	12,358,412	10,778,589
Cotton <sup>1</sup>	lb.	9,460.9	10,810.4	790	784	15,573.2	17,651.0
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	ton	36,420	38,762	1.81	1.69	65,812	65,448
Soybeans	bu.	73,636	74,635	41.5	36.1	3,056,032	2,692,014
Tobacco, All	lb.	325.04	323.35	1,841	2,187	598,320	707,030
Dark fire-cured	lb.	16.40	15.35	3,154	3,075	51,721	47,200
Burley	lb.	88.90	96.80	1,938	1,917	172,265	185,590
Dark air-cured	lb.	5.50	4.60	2,924	2,828	16,082	13,010
Winter Wheat	bu.	32,314	35,023	46.2	48.0	1,493,677	1,682,726

<sup>1</sup> Production in 480-lb. net weight bales. U.S. production includes American-Pima cotton.